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CITIZEN ARREST of CIA recruiter Steven Conn, right, was attempted by eight students, including Nzingha Clarke, left, at Williams College.

Students 'arrest' CIA recruiter

By Dianne Cutillo

WILLIAMSTOWN — The Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the War Against Nicaragua, a Williams College group, yesterday attempted to place a Central Intelligence Agency recruiter under citizens' arrest.

But the recruiter went about his business and interviewed some of the 20 Williams students who wanted to talk to him about jobs. He will see the others today.

The protesters charged that recruiter Steven Conn, by interviewing students for potential CIA employment, was committing a felony and said they had placed him under citizens' arrest for soliciting students "to aid in the violation of national and international law."

Conn listened silently as student Nzingha Clarke of New York City read the charge and Conn's Miranda rights to him outside the office of career counseling in Stetson

Hall at about 1:15. As Clark began to read specific charges against him, Conn walked into the office lobby. The students and several media representatives followed him.

Vietnam memories

The action was reminiscent of student protests of the Vietnam War era. But the fact that the CIA, unpopular with students then, had a host of college students who wanted to be interviewed was a reminder that times have changed on campus.

The group charged that the CIA violated both national laws, including the Neutrality Act and the Constitution's War Powers Clause, and international laws, including the United Nations charter.

Committee member Thomas Burton, New York City, called campus security to request assistance in "apprehending" the CIA officer. He said director of security Ransom H. Jenks Jr. "laughed" at the request.

The committee members, who had an audience of about 20 students as they staged the action, accused the college of obstruction of justice.

'Growing movement' claimed

The group also asserted that their action, similar to citizens' arrests of CIA recruiters at colleges such as Yale, Brown and Tufts universities, is part of a "growing national movement of resistance to the U.S.'s aggressive stance toward Nicaragua."

Committee member Brendan E. Glynn of Brooklyn, N.Y., said that a decade ago, CIA recruiters were not allowed to use campus facilities for interviews.

Daniel O'Connor, dean of the college, said the students' action was in accordance with a college policy which maintains the right for students to protest as long as the protest does not interfere with other students' rights to interview with the company or agency considered objectionable.

Of the students' action, O'Connor said "I think they were raising reasonable questions and they did it in a reasonable way."

Director of Career Counseling Fatma Kassamali said about 20 students were scheduled for interviews with the CIA yesterday afternoon and all day today. Another 26 were interviewed in November. She could not say how many Williams students are hired by the CIA.